

**In the Drawings:**

Enclosed herewith are replacement drawings of Figures 1 to 5 (5 sheets) with a copy of the original drawings as filed (5 sheets) herewith.

Figures 1 to 5 have been amended to remove copy machine marks, improve the character of lines and numbers, improve the legibility of reference characters and improve the quality of figure legends

Figures 2 to 5 have been further amended to correct the margins.

Figure 2 has been further amended to change the reference characters indicating the gas tank and muffler in order to correspond to an amendment to the specification.

**REMARKS**

The claims have been amended in order to describe the improvement over the prior art of having the levers, cylinder(s) and chain(s) used to lift the platform located within channels in the platform support arms. The claims have been further amended to highlight the closed container style of frame for enclosing the lift in the retracted position beneath the vehicle. Details of the amendments being submitted are provided in the following paragraphs.

Regarding the Examiner's objection to the disclosure, paragraph 4 of page 7 has been amended to change to reference characters used to indicate the muffler and gas tank, as the original characters were used elsewhere in the specification to indicate other objects.

Paragraph 3 of page 2 has been amended to correct an error in punctuation. The paragraph bridging pages 7 and 8 has been amended to correct one of the reference characters used to indicate the arms of the platform support and correct a spelling error.

Regarding the examiner's rejection of Claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. 112, Claim 1 has been amended to replace the phrases "the wheelchair" and "the vehicle" with "a wheelchair" and "the automobile" respectively in order to correct the lack of antecedent basis. Claim 4 has been amended to replace the phrase "generally rectangular in plan" with "generally rectangular in shape" for clarity.

Regarding the examiner's rejection of Claims 1-10, 12-15, 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Salas (US 4,314,504), independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the positioning of the lifting mechanisms within the channels of the platform support arms. This arrangement, as described on page 9 and shown in Figure 4, protects the cylinders, chains and levers from exposure to dirt, sand, rain, snow and other debris from below. Figure 7 of Salas illustrates that the area beneath the levers 101 and 103 adjacent to the cylinder 91 is open. Enclosing these moving components will prevent wear

and extend the life of the apparatus. The dependent claims have been amended to properly refer to amended claim 1.

Regarding the examiner's rejection of claims 11 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Salas (US 4,314,504) in view of Hall (US 4,058,228), it is believed that the above amendment of Independent Claim 1 overcomes the argument of obviousness. Hall teaches the use of an actuator to pivot a lever 38 by means of a chain 82 and sprocket 84 with each actuator 48 being mounted on a plate 46 supported on cross members 44. Mounting these components within a channel not only protects them from debris and resulting wear as mentioned above, but also keeps the overall height of the apparatus to a minimum. As can be seen in Figures 1-3 and 5 of Hall, the piston 48 protrudes above the support arms 30 when supported on cross members 44. Hall's apparatus is intended for large vehicles, such as buses, where there is significant ground clearance. The present invention is intended for smaller automobiles, such as mini-vans, where the distance between the ground and frame is significantly smaller. As a result, it is necessary to limit the height of the apparatus as much as possible. Mounting the lift mechanism within channels in the platform support arms helps meet this requirement.

Regarding the examiner's rejection of Claim 6 based on anticipation by Salas, it is believed that the frame disclosed in Salas does not comprise a hollow container for receiving the platform support. As seen in Figure 4, the frame is made up of vertical longitudinal members 34 connected by transverse members 31, 32 and 33. As seen in Figure 5, cylinder 46 protrudes above the top edge of frame member 34 between cross members 31 and 32, suggesting that the top of the frame is not closed off. Furthermore, the bottom edge of the platform support member 39 protrudes below the bottom edge of the frame member 34 along which it slides, as shown in Figure 5. This suggests that the bottom of the frame is not closed off. As a result, it is believed that the idea of the frame being a hollow container is not disclosed in Salas. As a result, new Claim 19 is a combination of the original claim 1 with the

limitation of the hollow container frame of Claim 6. New claim 20 describes an end member pivotally mounted on the distal end of the platform support in order to close the frame with the platform and platform support in the retracted position inside the frame, as outlined on page 8, lines 6-14 of the description.

Regarding the Examiner's objection to the drawings, replacement drawings are being provided for Figures 1-5. The figures have been amended to comply with the requirements regarding type of paper, margins, character of lines, numbers and letters, and numbers, letters and reference characters.

In view of the foregoing, further and more favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted

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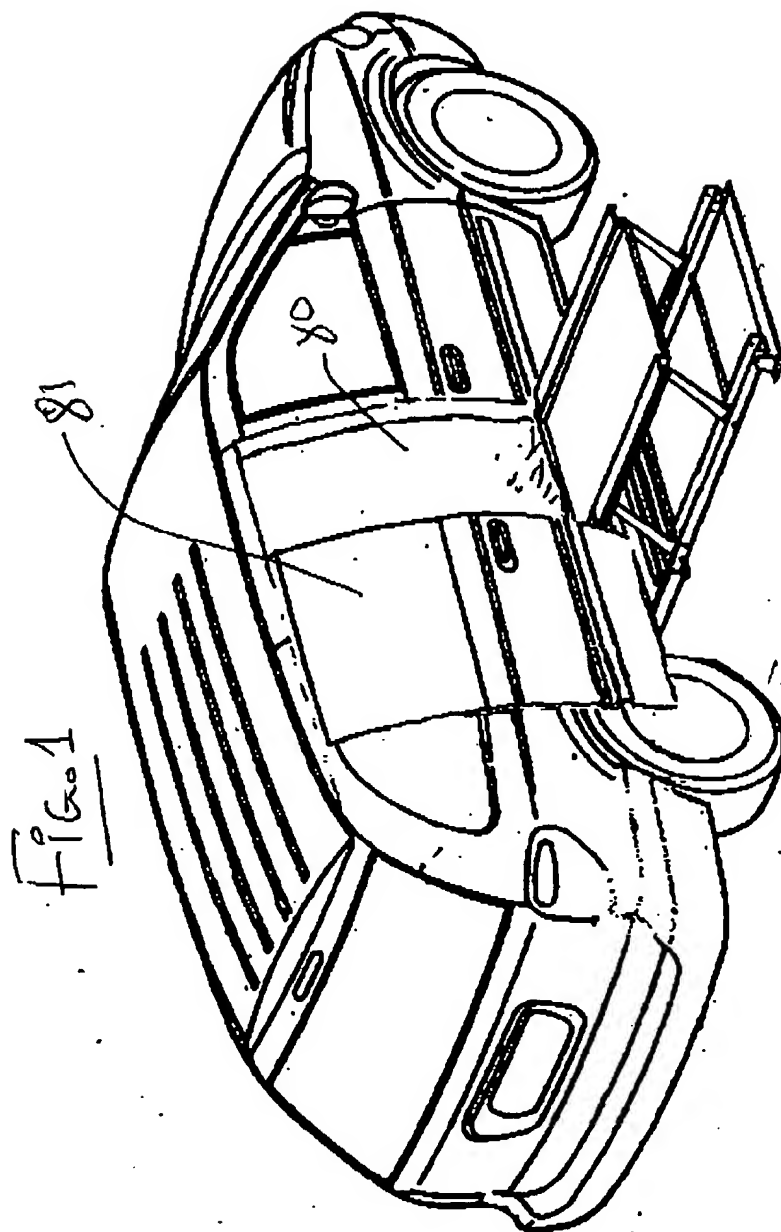
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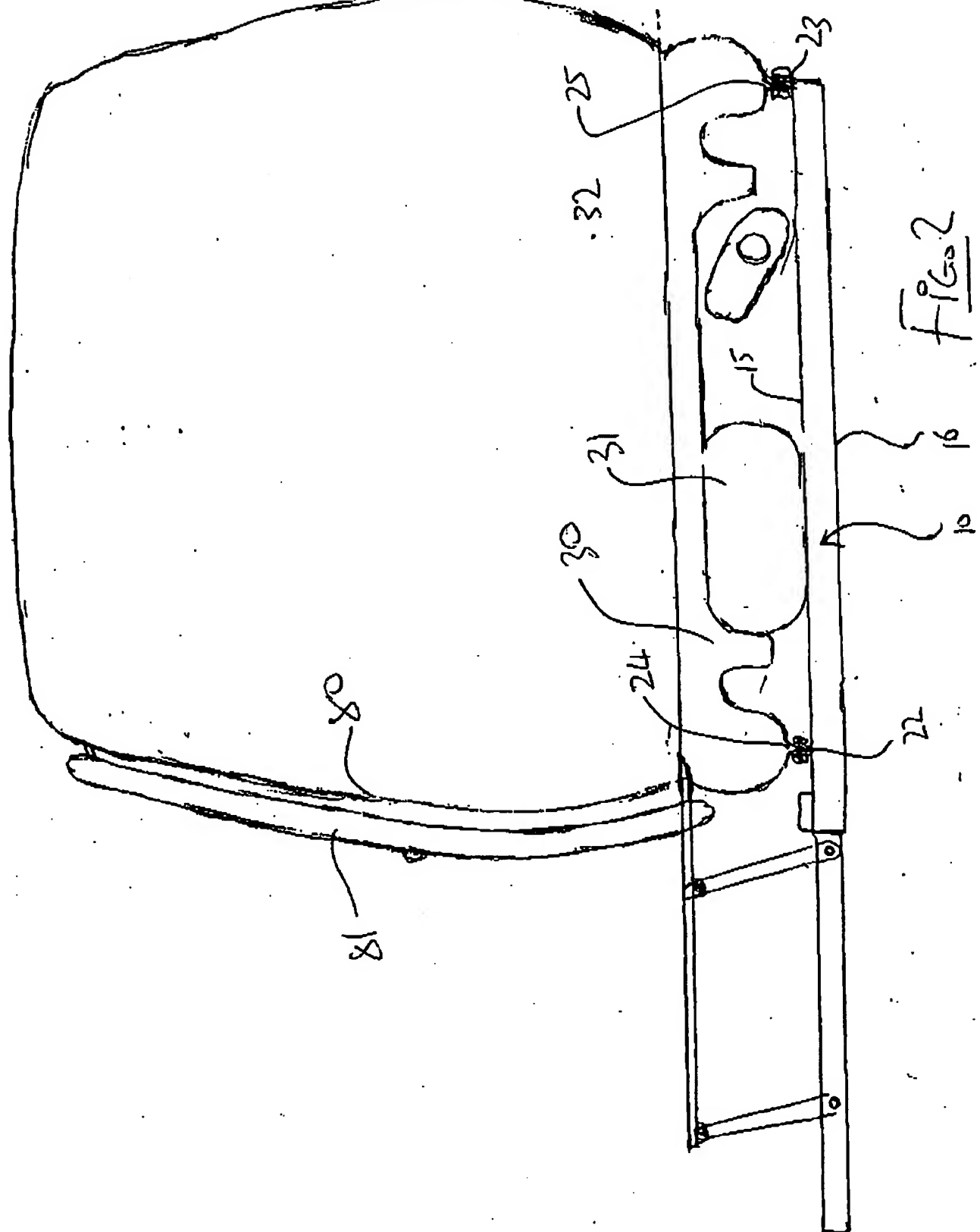
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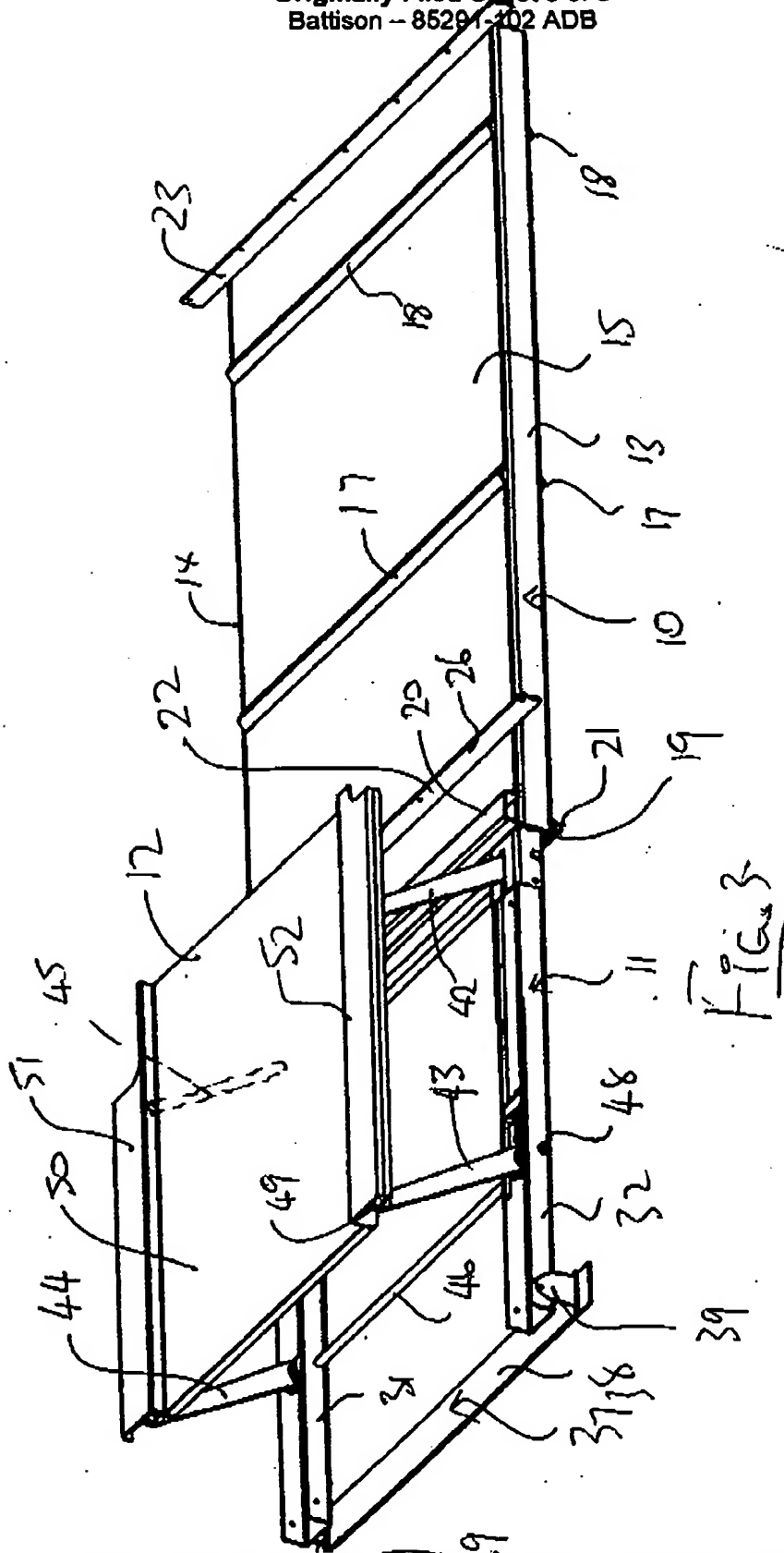
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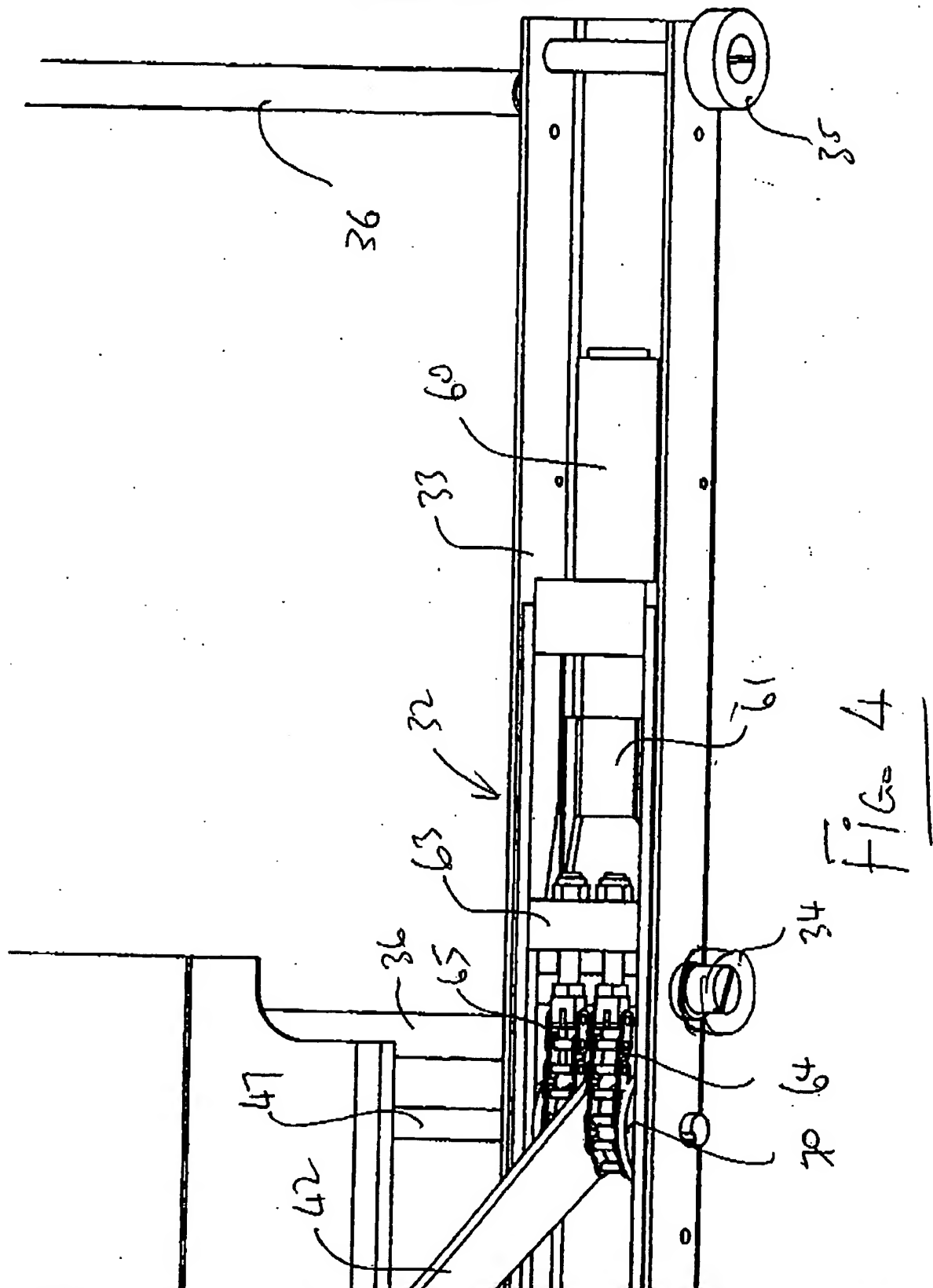
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